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Christmas Greetings

1917

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DEC 20 1917



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AFTER THE SCOURGING WHAT?

'Tis Christmas. Hands clasp hands again
And fires of friendship burn anew;
But now a larger love stands forth
Than yours for me or mine for you.

The Christ—this our trembling faith—
Dwelling in a thousand million lives,
Again with angry scourge
From his temple of the world
The desecrater drives.

Not this alone his task; nor ours.
Vexed and subtle,
With mighty difficulties fraught,
Stands the larger question,—
After the scourging, what?

Remember we the lame and blind
Who came that day the Christ to find
(That day when despots had been curbed)
And found a heart all undisturbed.
His wrath in love was made divine.

If the love that was his be ours,
That larger love that far transcends all bars
Of nation, race, or continent,
Not again
Shall bend
Beneath the yoke of war
The unrewarded, unrequited, poor;
Not again shall bleed and break
The hearts of those left desolate
To sate

Some monarch's lust for power,
Or hedge about the touchy pride
Of chosen tyrants of an hour.

From Ceylon's suns to Russian snow,

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From Volga's plains to Golden Gate,
That larger love shall come to know
The truth of peace; the lies of hate.
Shall stretch its eager brother hands
Across the seas to brother lands;
The world old truth shall learn at last—
The common good of toiling class,
The common weal of man at peace,
The common woe of war's disease.

Ah, yet shall rise,
In might and justice shall arise
The conquering, sweeping, power of right!

No more again
Shall God's true men,
Thrice ten million strong,
Like stolid brutes or driven slaves
By titled heads or scheming knaves
Be blindly led in throng on throng
To welter in their brother's blood.
The patient, unvoiced, multitude,
Grim in its iron fortitude,
Its right to rule shall come to know—
Legitimate right and reasonable due—
The right of millions o'er the few;
Shall feel its sinews stronger grow,
Shall knit its power across the seas,
Shall recognize its common foe—
The war-mad sect of pharasees.

Then, determined, slow,
Resistless as the flow

Below

The ocean's swirl,
Shall force its will—
The will of the world—

Upon the few who stand between
And chant in unison its theme,—
"This hell of war was not in vain."

Leagues of rulers, governments,
MAY give us peace that's permanent;
To make assurance doubly sure,
To give us peace that shall endure,
A league of peoples need we yet,
Supreme o'er king or cabinet.
This anthem sung in every tongue
From war-worn hearts in anguish wrung
Will bring the fruits of liberty;
A peace through world democracy!

The people bear the burden of war,
In every land, in every clime;
The people bear the burden of war,
In cause unjust or cause sublime.
Every war is a peoples war;
The people shall say when they want it.

The people bear the burden of war,
The dread of want, the want itself;
They know the miseries of the poor
When little ones starve in war's behalf.
The people bear the burden of war;
The people shall say when they want it.

The people bear the burden of war,
The load of grief, the anguished tear;
For those on battle fields afar,
The dumb, dull bitterness of fear.
Every war is a people's war;
The people shall say when they want it.

The people bear the burden of war,
Down in the trench or over the top,
The son's of us all are fighting there,
'Tis theirs to fight till they drop.
Every war is a people's war;
The people shall say when they want it.

The people bear the burden of war,
On hill or plain or ocean swell;
By toil of the brain or sweat of the brow
The billions of dollars we blow to hell
Indirect, from the people are.
The people shall say when they want it.

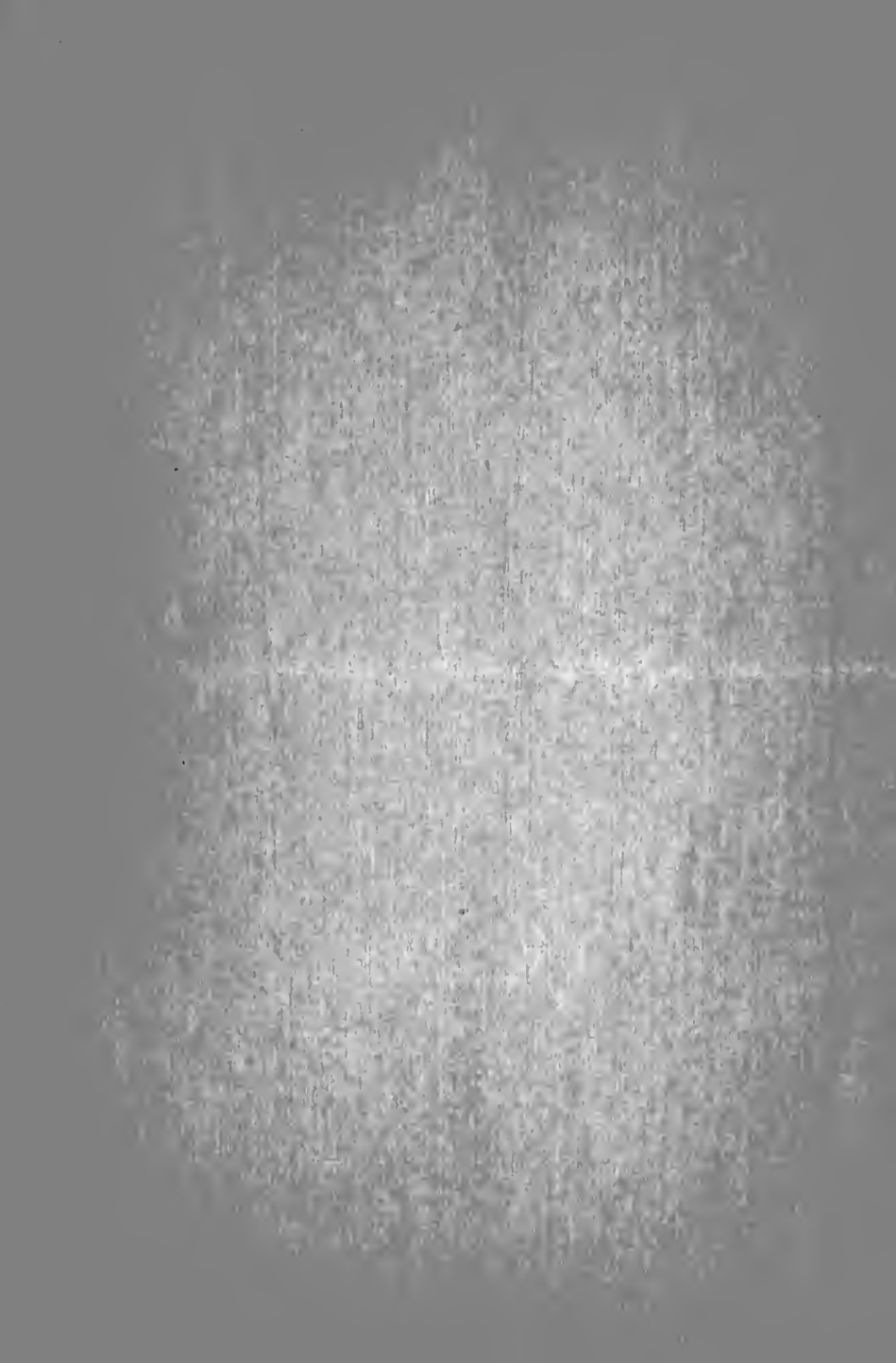
Then unite, ye people, near and far,—
American, German, English and Jew;
With one single purpose,—extinction of war;
With one only slogan to see us through,—
"Every war is a people's war;
The people shall say when they want it."

When rulers of yours or rulers of mine
Would lead us to murder our brother man,
The people shall judge if the cause be just,
The vote of the people in every land.
Every war is a people's war;
The people shall say when they want it.

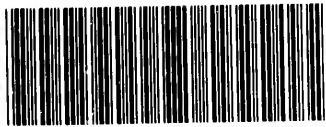
Be the ruler a king or emperor,
The government yours or government mine,
One choice shall be ours,—the question of war
The right of the people divine.
NO government then can start a war
Without the consent of the people.

'Tis Christmas. Hands clasp hands again;
And fires of friendship burn anew.
But now a larger love stands forth
Than yours for me or mine for you.

The love of Christ must conquer yet!
'Tis ours, who love, that goal to win,—
To make the angels' song a fact,
"Peace on earth; good will towards men."



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